



Ultimatebet is in Aruba with a new challenge to the pros: Elimination Blackjack *Final games take place on Friday and will air on CBS*

For five years, the Ultimatebet Aruba Poker Classic has attracted the top names in Texas Hold ‘em poker, but a new craze is sweeping the tournament tables, and top players on Team Ultimatebet like Ken Einiger and “Hollywood” Dave Stann predict that this will bring a whole new crop of players to the island.

For the first time, Ultimatebet is featuring an Elimination Blackjack tournament, and the semi-finals took place on Tuesday, winnowing down a field of 165 players to the twelve finalists that will compete for the big prize money in two separate matches on Friday morning and afternoon.

Dave Stann, “The Undisputed Bad Boy of Blackjack”, is a colorful character, and we do mean that figuratively and literally. He admits that being a theatre major and earning a degree at Kent State University in Ohio prepared him for the mind games that are part of Elimination Blackjack play. Having an IQ that qualified him to be a member of Mensa made him a master at counting cards. “When I am at a table in the middle of a tournament, certain aspects of my personality are heightened,” he confides, “it is less for the cameras and more for the psychological nature of the game. In poker, you see it all the time, people trying to psych each other out, but in blackjack, you don’t usually see that, because it is just a game of numbers. With this Elimination Blackjack format, and the constant pressure being on, it invites this psychological element.”

Joining Dave for a chat after the semi-finals was Ken Einiger, who is considered one of the top players on the circuit, he even has a website with the name www.worldblackjackchampion.com. This is his second trip to Aruba, one of his favorite stops on the circuit, particularly now that it is the first in a series of what will be the World Blackjack Tour broadcast on CBS Television starting in the fall of 2007. Both he and Dave Stann have received wide television exposure for several years before this event, and now that they will start ranking blackjack players, they have both placed in the top ten. Both also have “how to play” books on the market, and Dave describes his as a “no-holds-barred, take-no-prisoners guide that is not for the faint of heart.”

Ken expressed that Elimination Blackjack is “bringing the excitement and big money back to blackjack,” and predicts that the gaming public will see it really “take off.” Both he and Dave believe that the complexity of the play adds a new dimension to the game, where one can actually bring in elements that make poker so popular, such as bluffing with a secret bet.

Tuesday’s semi-finals produced an interesting mix of professional players and amateurs who are in Aruba by winning the “free roll” tournament at Ultimatebet online. Don Whitford of Jacksonville, Florida won his trip to Aruba for two, plus his entry into both the Aruba Poker Classic and the Elimination Blackjack tournaments without investing a single dime. He admitted to being a “very happy camper” after making the cut for Friday’s finals, and if he takes first place in one of the two matches, and also the grand prize from the Texas Hold ‘em main event, he would receive a bonus from Ultimatebet of a cool million dollars. If Don or anyone else manages this amazing feat, they would leave Aruba with over two million dollars in prize money. One need not wonder long why online gaming has become so popular.

Friday’s matches are to be held poolside at the Radisson Resort starting at 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM. There will be two final games, each starting with six players. The grand prizewinners will take home approximately \$40,000. The public is welcome to watch and CBS television will be filming the entire event. There will be a lot of great giveaways to the audience such as weekend stays at the Radisson resort and gift certificates to some fine jewelry stores on Aruba. The top ranked poker stars will all be there, offering their commentary and analysis, and for aficionados of the game, or even those that are simply curious, it should be an exciting day.